

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN SOCIOLOGY NETWORKS
August 23-27, 2021**

You are required to answer THREE (3) QUESTIONS (ONE QUESTION FROM EACH OF PARTS A, B & C). Each answer should be 10-12 pages (12-point font and double-spaced) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font), not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

PART A SOCIAL SUPPORT

A1

Provide a critical overview of the methods used for studying social support. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of typical approaches, and offer at least three suggestions for new and/or improved techniques to address timely issues related to social support.

A2

What has the network approach added to the study of social support? What are the theoretical costs or limitations of the social network approach to social support?

PART B SOCIAL INEQUALITY

B1

Explain how the term “social structure” is conceptualized in social network analysis, drawing a contrast between the network approach and the more common usage of the term in sociology. In your answer, describe how the network conceptualization of social structure gives useful insights to the study of social inequality.

B2

Consider the following social statuses that generate social inequality: class, gender, and race. How does a person’s location in these inequalities affect the kinds of networks that the person has? Critically discuss the theoretical arguments concerning this question and the research strategies that have been used to study it.

PART C DIFFUSION AND INFLUENCE

C1

Many forms of information and innovations flow through social networks. But different forms of information and innovation flow better through different kinds of networks. What things diffuse better through which kinds of networks? Critically discuss the current state of research and theory on this topic.

C2

Many network scholars examine the role of brokerage in social networks. Critically compare and contrast two or three different conceptualizations of brokerage and their effects in diffusion and influence processes.